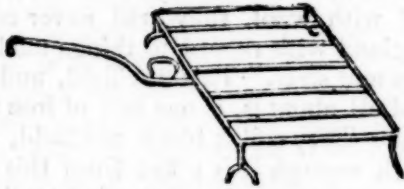


COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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“Without great quantities of paper-money, the interest of the Debt cannot be paid out of the taxes; for though standing armies and gagging-bills and power-of-imprisonment-bills are dreadful things, their effect is not of that kind which enables people to pay taxes. In all human probability, then, the whole of the interest of the Debt, and all the sinecures and pensions and salaries, and all the expenses of a thundering standing army, will continue to be made up by taxes, by loans from the bank, by exchequer bills, by every species of contrivance, to the last possible moment; and until the whole of the paper-system, amidst the war of opinions, of projects, of interests and of passions, shall go to pieces, like a ship upon the rocks.”—MR. COBBETT'S LEAVE-TAKING ADDRESS, dated *Liverpool*, 28th March, 1817, just before he set sail for *Long Island*.

NORTHERN TOUR.

(Continued from page 152.)

TO THE READERS OF THE REGISTER.

Sheffield, 31st January, 1830.

MY FRIENDS,

UPON this occasion, I address myself particularly to you, because, that which I have to say, after giving an account of my progress, is, in my opinion, deeply interesting to you.

In my last, I gave some account of my proceedings up to Tuesday night, the 26th instant, when I gave my third lecture at Leeds. I should in vain endeavour to give an adequate description of the pleasure which I felt at my reception, and at the effect which I produced in that fine and opulent capital of this great county of York; for the capital it is in fact, though not in name. On the first evening, the play-house, which is pretty spacious, was not completely filled in all its parts; but on the

second and the third, it was filled brim full, boxes, pit and gallery; besides a dozen or two of gentlemen who were accommodated with seats on the stage. Owing to a cold which I took at Huddersfield, and which I spoke of before, I was, as the players call it, not in very good voice; but the audience made allowance for that, and very wisely preferred sense to sound. I never was more delighted than with my audience at Leeds; and what I set the highest value on, is, that I find I produced a prodigious effect in that important town. There had been a meeting at Doncaster, a few days before I went to Leeds from Ripley, where one of the speakers, a Mr. BECKET DENISON had said, speaking of the taxes, that there must be an application of the *pruning hook* or of the *sponge*. This gentleman is a banker, I believe: he is one of the Becketts connected with the Lowthers; and he is a brother, or very near relation of that Sir John Becket who is the Judge Advocate General. So that, at last, others can talk of the pruning hook and the sponge, as well as I.

I cannot quit the subject of Leeds, without acknowledging the friendly attentions that I received from many gentlemen there, particularly from Mr. FOSTER, of that excellent provincial paper, the “LEEDS PATRIOT”; from Mr. HEAPS, Mr. MANN, and Dr. METCALFE. Here too, I had the pleasure to see for the first time, that Mr. DICKENSON, who detected the spy, OLIVER, and thereby saved, perhaps, scores of the lives of his countrymen; a merit, however, which was claimed by the great *Liar of the North*, commonly so called, who has been fattening for ten years upon the reputation of having performed this great service to Yorkshire. This great *Liar of the North* hid his head while I was in the town, came sneaking to the play-house, wrapped up in a sort of disguise; but I dare say he will break loose again in due time. Let him rave; and I do really feel sorrow that my

friend Mr. FOSTER, or any body else, should suffer themselves to be drawn aside for a moment from objects of real public importance, by the persevering lies and audacity of a grub-worm like this, who produces no effect in the way of thwarting their endeavours; who is, in fact, nullified by events and circumstances, and who can dupe none but those perverse fools who ought to be duped and ruined.

From Leeds I proceeded on to this place, not being able to stop at either Wakefield or Barnsley, except merely to change horses. The people in those towns were apprised of the time that I should pass through them; and, at each place, great numbers assembled to see me, to shake me by the hand, and to request me to stop. I was so hoarse as not to be able to make the post-boy hear me when I called to him; and, therefore, it would have been useless to stop; yet I promised to go back if my time and my voice would allow me. They do not; and I have written to the gentlemen of those places to inform them, that when I go to Scotland in the spring, I will not fail to stop in those towns, in order to express my gratitude to them. All the way along, from Leeds to Sheffield, it is coal and iron, and iron and coal. It was dark before we reached Sheffield; so that we saw the iron furnaces in all the horrible splendour of their everlasting blaze. Nothing can be conceived more grand or more terrific than the yellow waves of fire that incessantly issue from the top of these furnaces, some of which are close by the way-side. Nature has placed the beds of iron and the beds of coal alongside of each other, and art has taught man to make one to operate upon the other, as to turn the iron-stone into liquid matter, which is drained off from the bottom of the furnace, and afterwards moulded into blocks and bars, and all sorts of things. The combustibles are put into the top of the furnace, which stands thirty, forty, or fifty feet up in the air, and the ever-blazing mouth of which is kept supplied with coal and coke and iron-stone, from little iron wagons forced up

by steam, and brought down again to be re-filled. It is a surprising thing to behold; and it is impossible to behold it without being convinced that, whatever other nations may do with cotton and with wool, they will never equal England with regard to things made of iron and steel. This Sheffield, and the land all about it, is one bed of iron and coal. They call it black Sheffield, and black enough it is; but from this one town and its environs go nine-tenths of the knives that are used in the whole world; there being, I understand, no knives made at Birmingham; the manufacture of which place consists of the larger sort of implements, of locks of all sorts, and guns and swords, and of all the endless articles of hardware which go to the furnishing of a house. As to the land, viewed in the way of agriculture, it really does appear to be very little worth. I have not seen, except at Harewood and Ripley, a stack of wheat since I came into Yorkshire; and even there, the whole I saw; and all that I have seen since I came into Yorkshire; and all that I saw during a ride of six miles that I took into Derbyshire the day before yesterday; all put together would not make the one-half of what I have many times seen in one single rick-yard of the vales of Wiltshire. But this is all very proper: these coal-diggers, and iron-melters, and knife-makers, compel us to send the food to them, which, indeed, we do very cheerfully, in exchange for the produce of their rocks, and the wondrous works of their hands.

The trade of Sheffield has fallen off less in proportion than that of the other manufacturing districts. North America, and particularly the United States, where the people have so much victuals to cut, form a great branch of the custom of this town. If the people of Sheffield could only receive a tenth part of what their knives sell for by retail in America, Sheffield might pave its streets with silver. A gross of knives and forks is sold to the Americans for less than three knives and forks can be bought at retail in a country store in America. No fear of rivalry in this

trade. The Americans may lay on their tariff, and double it, and triple it; but as long as they continue to *cut* their victuals, from Sheffield they must have the things to cut it with.

The ragged hills all round about this town are bespangled with groups of houses inhabited by the working cutlers. They have not suffered like the working weavers; for, to make knives, there must be the hand of man. Therefore, machinery cannot come to destroy the wages of the labourer. The home demand has been very much diminished; but still the depression has here not been what it has been, and what it is, where the machinery can be brought into play. We are here just upon the borders of Derbyshire, a nook of which runs up and separates Yorkshire from Nottinghamshire. I went to a village, the day before yesterday, called *Mosborough*, the whole of the people of which are employed in the making of *sickles* and *scythes*; and where, as I was told, they are very well off even in these times. A prodigious quantity of these things go to the United States of America. In short, there are about twelve millions of people there, continually consuming these things; and the hardware merchants here have their agents and their stores in the great towns of America; which country, as far as relates to this branch of business, is still a part of old England. Upon my arriving here on Wednesday night, the 27th instant, I by no means intended to lecture until I should be a little recovered from my cold; but, to my great mortification, I found that the lecture had been advertised, and that great numbers of persons had actually assembled. To send them out again, and give back the money, was a thing not to be attempted: I, therefore, went to the Music Hall, the place which had been taken for the purpose, gave them a specimen of the state of my voice, asked them whether I should proceed, and they, answering in the affirmative, on I went. I then rested until yesterday, and shall conclude my labours here to-morrow, and then proceed to "*fair Nottingham*," as we used to sing when

I was a boy, in celebrating the glorious exploits of "*ROBIN HOOD and LITTLE JOHN*." By the by, as we went from Huddersfield to Dewsbury, we passed by a hill which is celebrated as being the burial-place of the famed Robin Hood, of whom the people in this country talk to this day.

At Nottingham, they have advertised for my lecturing at the play-house, for the 3d, 4th, and 5th of February, and for a public breakfast to be given to me on the first of those days, I having declined a dinner agreeably to my original notification, and my friends insisting upon something or other in that sort of way. It is very curious that I have always had a very great desire to see Nottingham. This desire certainly originated in the great interest that I used to take, and that all country boys took, in the history of Robin Hood, in the record of whose achievements, which were so well calculated to excite admiration in country boys, this Nottingham, with the word "*fair*" always before it, was so often mentioned. The word *fair*, as used by our forefathers, meant fine; for we frequently read in old descriptions of parts of the country of such a district or such a parish, containing a *fair* mansion, and the like; so that this town appears to have been celebrated as a very fine place, even in ancient times; but within the last thirty years, Nottingham has stood high in my estimation, from the conduct of its people; from their public spirit; from their excellent sense as to public matters; from the noble struggle which they have made from the beginning of the French war to the present hour; it only forty towns in England equal in size to Nottingham had followed its bright example, there would have been no French war against liberty; the Debt would have been now nearly paid off, and we should have known nothing of those manifold miseries which now afflict, and those greater miseries which now menace, the country. The French would not have been in Cadiz; the Russians would not have been at Constantinople; the Americans would not have been in the Floridas; we should not

have had to dread the combined fleets of America, France and Russia; and, which is the worst of all, we should not have seen the jails four times as big as they were; and should not have seen Englishmen reduced to such a state of misery as for the honest labouring man to be fed worse than the felons in the jails.

From Nottingham I intend to go to Leicester, on Saturday, the 6th of February, and to lecture there that night, if I shall have voice enough left for the purpose. Thence I intended to go to Wolverhampton; but my time will not permit; besides the probable deficiency in point of voice: and I hereby beg my friends at Wolverhampton to be assured, that I give up that place for the present with great regret, and will not fail to pay my respects to them in my way to modern Athens, in the spring. If I quit Leicester on Sunday, the 7th, I shall be in London on Monday, the 8th, and shall give a lecture at the MECHANICS' INSTITUTE, on Thursday, the 11th. This will depend upon the state of my voice; but further notice of which I will give in London, before the time shall arrive.

And now, my friends, readers of the Register, let me call your attention to that in which you have all a very deep interest, particularly if you have property dependent on the measures of the Government. What that Government will do, it is impossible for us even to guess. If it proceed in its present course, we may prepare for that convulsion, for which MURRAY'S *Quarterly Review* bids us prepare. If the King's Speech (which will appear before you can possibly see this) recommend to the Parliament to take the question of the currency, or the state of the country; if it recommend to the Parliament to take these, or either of them into *consideration*, then lay your account with a return to the base paper-money; to a raising of prices, and all the consequences which I shall mention more particularly by and by. And if, during the first debate, you perceive the Ministers to be prepared for appointing a committee to inquire into the causes of

the prevalent distress, then you may be sure that a return to the base paper-money is intended; and if there be a return to that base paper-money, then be prepared for it.

The consequence of a return to the base paper-money, no matter under what shape or in what name, is, that there must very soon be a stoppage of gold payments at the Bank. The banks about the country will be the agents for circulating the Bank of England paper, which will be issued on no security but that of the stock which the Bank holds, and which will, therefore, be a Government paper to all intents and purposes. The exchanges will immediately be against us all over the world. The French funds, and all other funds, will immediately rise all over England; because we shall be paying our dividends in depreciated paper, while their dividends will be payable in gold. If, therefore, you have money in the funds, as it is called, sell your stock instantly, and turn it into gold; for it is very probable that a sovereign will very soon sell for forty shillings in paper, if a measure so fatal as this were now to be adopted. If you have money lodged in the Bank, or with bankers, withdraw it and turn it into gold, unless you have an assurance from the conduct of the Government and the Parliament, that there is to be no return to a depreciated paper-money. Observe, that this measure, if it be resorted to, which I trust it will not, for how is it possible to believe that the Duke of Wellington, after his solemn declarations, will return to such a measure! If, however, the measure should be resorted to, do not expect any warning: it must come like a thief in the night: there must be no discussions on the matter; for, the moment people perceived that their stock or their deposits were about to be paid in a depreciated paper, they would rush to the Bank and to all the country bankers, and turn every scrap of paper that they held into so much gold. No man in his senses would fail to do this: it would be done as surely as that men love to save themselves from destruction. Therefore, if done at all, the stoppage of gold payments must

take place by order in Council, just as it did in the year 1797; and, very likely, on the very same day of the year, namely, on the 26th day of February!

See, then, the situation in which you would stand, if you had debts due to you; contracts unfulfilled of which you would be the receiver. In both these cases, you would be paid in depreciated money; if you had money in the funds, or money deposited with bankers, this money, the moment a stoppage took place at the Bank, would not be worth in reality one-half of what it is worth now. Therefore, be upon your guard: be prepared in time: get the gold, for that cannot deceive you. If you were to sell out, and lay by the gold, and if, after all, the Government and Parliament did not return to the base paper-money, you could lose but a trifle, a mere trifle of interest, while, on the other hand, you must and would lose one-half of your money if the legal tender were to come and find your money in the hands of others. Be therefore prepared, my friends. Scores of men, since I have been from home, have come to me on purpose to thank me for having given that advice to them, by following which they have saved their fortunes; or, at least, saved themselves from ruin. Be you advised now, then: be you on your guard now; and do not stand hesitating and doubting about the matter: get the gold, trust nobody, have no outstanding credits anywhere, draw all close about you; diminish your expenses as much as possible; and be snugly prepared for the grand catastrophe.

It is said by some, that the paper-money, if put out again, will be put out with limitations and restrictions, and will not be suffered to be out in such quantities as to expose the banks to blowing up. Now observe, what is the object of putting out the paper-money? It is to cause *prices to rise*. Prices cannot rise in consequence of any additional quantity of money, without a depreciation of the money; that is to say, without making the paper-money less valuable than the gold; so that the very object of putting out the paper-

money is to cause the value of the money to be less than it is now. It would be useless to put out a small quantity of the paper-money; because that would not bring the relief that is wanted. The quantity put out must be large; and it must be made a legal tender, or it could not be kept out; so that, here would be open and avowed bankruptcy; an openly declared inability to pay in gold; on every exchange in the world, England would be written up for a bankrupt nation; its paper-money would be assignats to all intents and purposes; and never could the nation recover from that state, without passing through a series of convulsions something like those which marked the progress of the French Revolution.

The paper-money being made legal tender, all men must receive it in payments of debt; all mortgagees and annuitants must receive it in payment of interest; the fundholders must receive it in payment of their dividends; the Government must receive it in payment of taxes; for the remainder of the present leases, landlords must receive it in payment of rents; but the gold, of which there is now a great quantity everywhere throughout the country, would assert its right of superior value. As far as sensible men were enabled to hoard, they would hoard it; but a part of it must be used as currency still; and as every man, after the experience that we have had, would wish to possess gold in preference to paper, the gold sovereign will pass for more than a pound in paper, and men would carry on their private transactions very frequently in gold. Hence would come, in a very short time, *two prices* in buying and selling: a paper price and a money price. The law of legal tender could not interfere here. The tender would be legal in the case of debts, contracts, dividends, and taxes; but ROBESPIERRE, and ROBESPIERRE only, ever dreamed of a law to prevent men from making bargains, specifying a distinction between the paper and the gold. Therefore, we should make that distinction in a very short time. A man who had been paid once in legal tender, would take care

the next time to be paid in gold, or in a greater quantity of paper in proportion to the depreciation of that paper. When I was in France, a little before the reign of ROBESPIERRE, I used to send a guinea to almost any shop in St. Omer's, and receive about 120 or 130 francs for it in paper. When I went into the market, which I always did to get the butter, while I was at lodgings at St. Omer's, the market women used to say, when I asked the price of a piece of butter, "*Six francs, Sir; but if you pay in money, one franc,*" or thereabouts. So will it be in England in a very short time, if horrible bankruptcy and legal tender make their appearance again. Six one-pound notes for a pig; but if you pay in money, a sovereign. This is TWO PRICES; and as PAINE said long ago, two prices are the passing-bell of paper-money.

Then, look at the situation of the Government: collecting its taxes in worthless rags; paying its soldiers two-pence in reality, instead of thirteen-pence a day. No one will give the tax-gatherer a bit of hard money: all the hard money will be kept hoarded, or will be confined to the traffic between man and man. In short, the Government and Parliament have, ever since the year 1819, been attempting to accomplish that most impossible of all impossible things; namely, the compelling of a nation to pay in real money debts contracted and appointments made in depreciated money.

Some men imagine, that because the nation experienced little distress during the war, while legal tender existed, it would experience no distress now if we were to return to the legal tender. These men forget that the circumstances have totally changed; that the commerce of all the world was then at our command; that foreigners could not come here except by special license; that England was the place of deposit for all the riches of Europe; that there were no means of sending the gold out of the country; that the gold was, in fact, not in circulation at all, the greater part having been sent away by the Government; that individuals had no chan-

nels through which to send it; that there was no open market for it; and that the people did not understand as they now understand, the doctrine of depreciation, and the vast superiority of gold over paper. Vain, therefore, is the hope that a legal tender paper would not now lead to two prices. Who would venture to keep buying a parcel of paper-money, having no fixed value, liable to lose one-half of its worth in the course of six months? Every one would be anxious to have some gold, and as much as possible. Every man who went abroad must take some gold to pay his expenses. Therefore, men would seek to have gold; and, in order to obtain it, they would make their sales for gold. Whatever he might want to pay rent, to pay taxes, to pay interest on mortgage, to pay annuities, he would be content to have in paper; but whatever he wanted to keep by him for any time at all, he would take care to have in gold. There would be a paper price and a gold price, as there was in the market of St. Omer's, and the Government would have to receive the paper, and the gold would remain amongst the people. ROBESPIERRE passed a law to put people to death for making this distinction; he would insist that assignats and gold should circulate side by side; and, after having shed rivers of blood to accomplish his purpose, came the just guillotine which put an end to his law and his life.

Thus, my friends, you are warned in time: be sensible, be wise: turn into gold every thing that you can, and then sleep soundly in the night, and in the day-time calmly view the progress of events. If you disregard my advice; if you treat it with suspicion; if you hesitate to act upon it; and if ruin fall upon you, the fault will not be mine. If you have any thing to sell, and can obtain any thing near the value of it for ready money, sell it now, and turn the proceeds into gold, and keep this gold until the end of the session of Parliament, which is now about to begin. I tell you again, that if legal tender come, it will come like a thief in the night.

Be vigilant; be prudent; act at once,
and believe me

Your faithful friend,
and most obedient servant,
WM. COBBETT.

P. S. Look at the motto to this paper;
look well at it; read it a dozen times
over: in such an hour, how precious
will be a sovereign in gold!

ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN.

THE last notice that I gave about this work, was, that the next Number would be published on the 10th of February. I then thought that I should be in town sooner than I shall be there. I must, therefore, put it off until the first of March, when I shall continue it monthly regularly until the work be completed. Since I have been from home, scores of persons have come to me to thank me for writing this book, especially young men; which is calculated to give me, and does give me, a great deal of pleasure and of pride. A very good-looking rather young man introduced himself to me at Leeds, with a request to shake me by the hand, and as he held my hand in his, he said, "I have to thank this hand for making me a sober man." And certainly I do believe that I have done more in this way than all the parsons in the kingdom; than all the teachers of all the sorts of religion put together. I write that which men will *read*, and remember as well as read; and my little books will be read with delight and advantage, when all the dull rubbish of all the lazy parsons, and all the mongrel teachers, will have been used for the singeing of fowls, or for purposes more vile.

BIRMINGHAM

POLITICAL UNION.

THIS is a very important matter. We see, at last, then, the middle class uniting with the working classes. Everywhere where I have been, I have endeavoured to show the necessity of

such union. The boroughmongers have long contrived to divide these two classes, for purposes much too obvious to mention. At last, the middle class begins to perceive that it must be totally sacrificed, unless it make a stand, and a stand it cannot make unsupported by the lower class. The declaration, or address, put forth by the leaders in this union, is evidently from the pen of Mr. THOMAS ATTWOOD: and, like every thing else that comes from his pen, exhibits a great deal of knowledge and a great deal of talent. The main object of the union is to obtain for these two classes their share of the representation in Parliament. Were I disposed to be as ill-natured as some people have been towards me, I might call this *inconsistent* in Mr. ATTWOOD, seeing that, only last year, he disapproved of my wishing for reform, until the grand question of the currency should be settled. I do not call this inconsistency in him: he has seen reason to change his mind; he has seen reason to convince him that the nation cannot be saved without admitting the people at large to a share in the representation. This now seems to be the opinion of all men of any sense and sincerity. Everywhere you hear men exclaim, that no effort is of any avail, or can be of any avail, as long as the House of Commons shall be constituted as it is. It is in vain to attempt to disguise this fact. Reform or convulsion is our choice. It is now twenty years since I contended in print over and over again, that as long as the paper bubble could be kept up we should have no reform; and now that the bubble seems to be drawing towards the close of its destructive existence, reform appears to be approaching almost of its own accord.

There is an article in the *QUARTERLY REVIEW* that has excited a great deal of public attention. It calls for a *reform of Parliament*; it calls for an *adjustment*; it calls, in short, for what I have been calling for so many years. It calls for those very things which it applauded the Ministers for in 1817, for endeavouring to stifle by their dungeon and gagging bills. Strange change! But no-

thing like the changes that we have yet to behold. We shall see such changes before three years are over our heads ; or, at any rate, in a comparatively short space of time, as no nation ever yet saw. The people everywhere are in full expectation of these changes : you meet with not a man who is not prepared for them ; and it is very curious that every one seems to look forward to them as the only ground of hope. I look upon this Birmingham address as a matter of great public importance, and as such, I insert it here, recommending my readers to go through it with the greatest attention.

BIRMINGHAM POLITICAL UNION, FOR THE PROTECTION OF PUBLIC RIGHTS.

The experience of the last fifteen years, must certainly have convinced the most incredulous that the rights and interests of the middle and lower classes of the people, are not efficiently represented in the Commons' House of Parliament. A very few observations will be sufficient to place this important subject beyond the possibility of doubt.

In the year 1819, a bill was passed into a law, under the assumption that it would add only *four per cent.* to the national taxes and burdens. It is now very generally acknowledged that the bill thus passed into a law, has added *cent. per cent.* to the national burdens ; instead of *four per cent.*, that it is literally *doubled*, or is in the undeniable process of *doubling*, the real weight, and the real value of every tax, rent, and monied obligation, in the kingdom. Ten years have since elapsed : and yet, to this day, no adequate effort has been made by the representatives of the people to reduce the taxes in a degree corresponding with the increase which has thus been *surreptitiously* effected in their weight and pressure ! What further proof is required of the absolute necessity of reform ?

Nor has any attempt been made by the legislature to retrace their steps, and to rectify the grievous oppression which has thus been occasioned. On the contrary, the fatal error is now coolly acknowledged, and the country is gravely assured, by the very men who benefit by the measure, that it is *now too late to retreat !*

At three different periods, during the operation of this fatal measure, and now a fourth time, the industrious classes of the community generally, have been reduced to a state of distress which has heretofore been unexampled in its general extent and severity. At each of these periods, the profits of productive capital and industry have been destroyed,

or so much reduced, as no longer to afford the just and necessary inducements to the employment of labour. The working classes of the country have thus been thrown generally out of employment, or they have been compelled to endure more labour than nature can support, or their fair and reasonable earnings have been sacrificed, in order to prevent the ruin of their employers.

Strange and unnatural as this state of things evidently is, it has, more than once, been attended with anomalies which have rendered it ten times more unnatural still. The markets have been glutted with food and clothing on the one hand, and with a hungry and naked population on the other. The most eminent parliamentary authorities have declared that the *loaves* have been too many for the *mouths*, and that the *mouths* have been too many for the *loaves*, at the *very same time* !

It is most certain, that if the rights and interests of the industrious classes of the community had been properly represented in Parliament, a general state of distress, attended with anomalies like these, would have commanded the instant attention of the House of Commons. The *cause* of the distress would have been ascertained, and the proper remedy would have been applied without delay. But, what has been the conduct of the House of Commons ? To this very day, the *cause* of these strange and unnatural, and distressful anomalies, has never once been inquired into ! At three different periods, when this vital subject has been brought before the House of Commons, *they have literally refused to allow its investigation* ! In the year 1822, Mr. Western gave notice of a motion to inquire into the *cause* of the national distress. *The House of Commons refused to grant the inquiry* ! In 1827, Mr. Edward Davenport gave notice of a similar motion. *The House of Commons refused to grant the inquiry* ! In the last year, Sir Richard Vyvyan gave notice of a similar motion. *And again the House of Commons refused to grant the inquiry* ! Upon three different occasions, the House of Commons has thus exposed itself to the suspicion of either a total *unwillingness*, or a total *inability*, to protect the most vital interests of the country.

Here, then, we have *proof* that the rights and interests of the great mass of the community are not properly represented in Parliament. A triple proof has been added to every argument which had previously been drawn from reason and experience, that an effectual representation of the industrious classes in the Commons' House of Parliament is alike necessary to the welfare of the people, and the safety of the throne.

Nor is this state of things much to be wondered at, when the present state and composition of the Commons' House of Parliament are considered. That honourable House, in its present state, is evidently too far removed in habits, wealth, and station, from the wants and interests of the lower and middle classes

of the people, to have any just views respecting them, or any close identity of feeling with them. The great aristocratical interests of all kinds are well represented there. The landed interest, the church, the law, the monied interest;—all these have engrossed, as it were, the House of Commons into their own hands, the members of that honourable House being all immediately and closely connected with those great interests. *But the interests of industry and of trade have scarcely any representatives at all!* These, the most vital interests of the nation, the sources of all its wealth and of all its strength, are comparatively *unrepresented*; whilst every interest connected in any way with the *national burdens* is represented in the fullest degree! If any few individual members of the House of Commons should happen to be concerned in trade, it may be truly said that such members are in general far more concerned in interests hostile to trade, than in trade itself. They are, too often, rich and retired capitalists, who have, perhaps, left *one-tenth* of their wealth in trade, and have withdrawn the other *nine-tenths* from active occupation. It is, therefore, of but little consequence to them whether trade flourishes or not. It is possible, indeed, that upon some occasions, these rich and retired capitalists may derive a jealous and morbid satisfaction from the sufferings of their competitors in trade; and after having availed themselves of the facilities of *credit*, to accumulate their own fortunes, they may possibly contemplate, with pleasure, the removal of those facilities from others, and their hopeless and unavailing struggles to follow in the same career.

Undoubtedly, it is essential to the national welfare that this state of things should be changed. The "*Citizens and Burgesses*" of the House of Commons should, in general, be real "*Citizens and Burgesses*;" men engaged in trade, and actively concerned in it; and having their fortunes and their prospects in life committed in it. The present members of the House of Commons, although called "*Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses*," are practically all "*Knights of the Shire*;" inasmuch as they are generally possessed of the same fortunes, and living under the same habits, influences, and impressions as "*Knights of the Shire*." It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that the members of the House of Commons should exhibit, generally, a total ignorance of trade, and of the wants and interests of the industrious classes of the community; and too frequently an indisposition to inquire into the distresses of the trade, or to give themselves any great trouble in relieving them.

It is idle to blame this kind of conduct in them. It is in the nature of man to look principally to his own interest. *It is the public themselves who are to blame, for having allowed a state of things to grow up in which the public interests are entrusted into improper hands.* If the public had kept a proper guard over their own concerns; if they had sent to Parliamen-

real "*Citizens and Burgesses*," selected from among themselves, and having the same interests as themselves, acquainted with the same wants, and modes, and means, and living under the same habits, influences, and impressions as themselves, then the rights and interests of the industrious classes would have been properly guarded and secured. This was the practice in the better days of the constitution; and it must become the practice again; or there can be no prosperity, no liberty, no security for this injured and degraded nation.

But it is not merely of the want of a community of interest, of feeling, and of knowledge in the House of Commons, that the industrious classes have a right to complain. A majority of that honourable House is generally believed to be elected by a few hundred rich individuals only; and near one hundred of its members are exposed to the suspicion of having their judgments biased by the influence of emoluments drawn from the public purse. The interests of the mass of the people are thus exposed to dangers on all sides, and protected on none. Ignorance, imbecility, and indifference, on the one hand; power, influence, and perhaps corruption, on the other; all these combine to render the cause of the industrious classes hopeless in England, unless some measures can be devised for restoring to those important classes that legal control over the legislative functions, which the constitution has originally placed in their hands. Without this, it is probable that the reward of industry will be permanently destroyed; and that the merchants, manufacturers, farmers, and traders of the united kingdom will be reduced to a state of general poverty and degradation; whilst the working classes will be driven down in their wages, and deprived of employment generally, until they have no other resource but the overcrowded workhouse for their support.

From all these considerations, it follows, therefore, that an effectual reform in the Commons' House of Parliament is absolutely necessary for the welfare and security of the country.

But how is reform to be obtained? Is it reasonable to expect that the men whose ignorance and imbecility have caused the national injuries and distresses, should voluntarily reform themselves? The thing is not possible. What then must we do? Shall we have recourse to a vigour trenching upon the law? God forbid. Fortunately for us, and for our country, the constitution has yet preserved to us some conservatory principles, to which we may have recourse, and by means of which we may hope that this great and vital object may be accomplished in a just, legal, and peaceful way.

The exercise of those principles, however, is surrounded with many legal difficulties and dangers, which can only be counteracted by a general union and organization of the industrious classes, and which render counsel, caution, and direction, necessary at every step.

The soundest legal advice, the most inflexible integrity, the most generous, upright, and honourable motives, and the most dutiful submission to the laws, are all required to ensure ultimate success.

Under these circumstances, therefore, it is necessary to form a general political union and organization of the industrious classes, and to appoint a political council, to inquire, consult, consider, and determine, and report from time to time, upon the legal rights which yet remain to us, and upon the political measures which it may be legal and advisable to have recourse to. It is necessary also, to provide permanent funds for the defrayment of the necessary legal expenses, which may be incurred, under the direction of the POLITICAL COUNCIL; for money is the *sinew of law*; and without great expense, no great object can be secured.

But it is not alone in the cause of reform, that union, and counsel, and organization, and co-operation, are necessary on the part of the industrious classes. The benefits which even the present state of the representation is capable of administering, are not properly secured to the public, from the want of some organized and efficient means of bringing the interests and opinions, and the wants and modes and means of the community to the knowledge of the legislative bodies. It is an old proverb, that "*what is every one's business is no one's business*," and, therefore, the common business of "*every one*," is generally attended to by none. What more important business can "*every one*" have, than that of bringing the interests and the wants of the community to the knowledge of the legislative councils? However desirous both Houses of Parliament may be of promoting the happiness and welfare of the community, they have not sufficient means of obtaining a knowledge of their wants and interests, nor of the measures necessary for their gratification and protection. Bred up in the lap of luxury, and surrounded by bands of flatterers and parasites, and of interested and designing men, whose business is to deceive and misrepresent, the members of the legislature have no sufficient means of coming to a knowledge of the wide-spread havoc which their own measures produce throughout the country. A casual town's meeting now and then, without system, consistency, or permanency of object, or operation, and, perhaps, a county meeting at distant intervals, still more precarious and irregular, combined with dubious and generally delusive representations from the public press; these furnish, at present, almost the only means of bringing the constituent and the legislative bodies into useful and efficient contact with each other. Hence, the pernicious legislation under which the country now suffers. Hence, the innumerable acts of parliament, which are passed to day and repealed to-morrow, which are passed again on the third day, and again counteracted on the fourth, and which, whether passed, or repealed, or counteracted, or continued in force, have still a constant and increasing

tendency to trench upon the rights and interests of the industrious classes of the community. If those important classes of men had been properly protected by political unions among themselves, if they had possessed political councils in all the great towns and districts, with ample funds at their command, and with such intellect and integrity as their own ranks abundantly afford; under these circumstances, it would not have been possible for those innumerable acts to have been passed, which now *hem in*, as it were, the rights and liberties of the subject on every side, and render it almost impossible for the *poor man to move*, without *trenching upon a law*. Societies of this kind, would have watched closely the proceedings of the legislature, they would have sounded the alarm on the approach of danger; they would have pointed out every rash, unjust, destructive or oppressive measure, the very moment it was first agitated; and there is no reason to believe that Parliament would not have listened to remonstrances thus timely, constitutionally, and efficiently supplied. The *tax receivers*, would have been reduced in their capital and income, in the same degree as the *tax payers*; or they would, at any rate, never have been permitted to build up their own aggrandisement out of the plunder and degradation of the *tax payers*. The *taxes* of the country, instead of pressing almost exclusively upon the *poor*, would have been made to press justly and equally upon the *rich*; instead of *throttling*, as it were, the industry of the country, and consigning the struggling tradesman to the gaol, they would have been collected out of the accumulations and superfluities of the nation, and not out of its difficulties, embarrassments, and distresses. The prosperity of *all* would have been preserved; and *all* would have been brought to contribute *equally* to the national emergencies, according to their respective means.

Undoubtedly, it is just and necessary that the taxes of the country should be reduced in the same degree as the price of labour is reduced, and as the value of the money in which they are collected is increased. We estimate this reduction of taxes at full *one-half* their present amount. By a measure of this kind, much distress and injury must certainly be experienced among the *tax receivers* and dependents of the Government. But this distress and injury have already been experienced in a *sevenfold degree* by the *tax payers*. The same justice *ought* to exist for one as for the other. We could have wished that all distress and injury might have been prevented, among either of these great divisions of society, by a just and proper adaptation of the money of the country, to the existing state of the taxes, rents, debts, contracts, and obligations of the country. By this great measure, all the distress which the country has endured, *might have been prevented*. By this great measure, all the distress which the country now suffers, *may yet be relieved*. By this great measure, the general state of prosperity which existed

in the years 1824 and 1825, may yet be restored, and rendered permanent throughout the country.

All this was and is in the power of the Government, unless indeed the devastation of agriculture, combined with the exclusion of foreign grain from our markets, have already destroyed the stock of provisions necessary for the support of the population.

But the Government have refused this just, wholesome, and necessary measure. Instead of adjusting the measure of value, they have decreed that the country shall be forced through the rugged path of adjusting the innumerable things which it measures!! Instead of accommodating their money to the existing habits and associations of men's minds, and to the state of prices, taxes, contracts, wages, rents, debts, and obligations existing among the present generation of men, they have thought proper to force back all those great interests into conformity with an ancient, obsolete, and unsuitable standard of value! It is through this rugged road, that the Government compels the nation to travel. Be it so then. The Government have chosen their own path. It is but just that it should lead them to the same reckoning as it brings the country. It is but just that the taxes of the Government should be reduced in the same degree as the wages of labour. The Government will give to us the ancient prices and the ancient wages. We will give to them the ancient taxes and the ancient salaries. All their salaries, payments, and expenses were doubled in depreciated money. But they were not doubled in the ancient coins. Nor shall they so be doubled with our consent. We will give them one-half the present monied amount of the taxes. We will give them the full amount of the property and labour which we contracted to give them when the present taxes were imposed. But we will not willingly give them one shilling more. This is the line of conduct which the Government forces upon us. The taxes of the country are now doubled in real value by the increase which is effected in the value of the money in which they are collected. And when the present monetary measures of the Government shall have produced their full effect in forcing down the prices of British property and labour to the continental level, there can then be no doubt that the pressure of the taxes upon the industrious classes will be double what it now is.

Unless the taxes, therefore, are reduced in the same degree as the value of money is raised, all the property and all the labour of the country will be laid prostrate at the feet of the Government! Therefore the taxes must be reduced.

One other subject requires the most serious investigation. No one can have read the Bank Reports of the two Houses of Parliament, upon which the Act, which has had the effect of confiscating the property and labour of the industrious classes, was founded in 1819, without being struck with the remarkable discrepancy which exists between the evidence given, and the decision come to. Almost every

witness that was examined, gave warning of the general distress which such a tremendous measure must produce; but when the distress came, it was strangely and perversely attributed to every possible cause that could be imagined, excepting only the one which the witnesses had pointed out and foretold!! Nor can any one have attended to the proceedings of Parliament for the last ten years, without being still more forcibly struck with the oblique and pertinacious determination which has been constantly exhibited, or refuse all further inquiry into this most important subject. The subject indeed has been shunned as a very pestilence, as if it were not possible to allude to it without some great and undefined danger, which it was of the last importance to avoid. In the mean while, it is undoubted that this very measure has occasioned hundreds of millions sterling of profit to some parties, whilst much greater losses have been occasioned to others. Now, if any part of this enormous and unjust profit should have found its way corruptly into the pockets of members of Parliament, who may possibly have made both the Parliament and the country their dupes, the national justice most certainly requires that such members of Parliament should be brought to trial, and to condign punishment.

When the notorious South Sea Scheme was exposed and brought to light about a hundred years ago, the whole country resounded with petitions from all quarters, calling for justice on the heads of the guilty. In this nefarious conspiracy, members of Parliament, lords of the treasury, chancellors of the exchequer, and secretaries of state, were found implicated; and all were brought to justice. An Act of Parliament was passed to prevent the parties implicated from leaving the kingdom, and also from alienating their estates and effects. Another Act of Parliament was passed for the purpose of inquiring into the private fortunes of the directors and promoters of the scheme; and of compelling them to give up the plunder which they had made. Under this Act of Parliament, the directors were compelled to give up from their private fortunes the sum of 1,700,000*l.*, an immense sum in those days, which was afterwards distributed among their victims as some small compensation for the losses which they had sustained. Upon the present occasion, there can be no doubt that the losses and injuries which have already been inflicted by the Act of 1819, have been a hundred times greater than any which attended the South Sea Scheme. It is, therefore, of the highest importance, that an effectual Parliamentary inquiry should be instituted into this mysterious subject, and that any members of Parliament, who may corruptly have derived profit from the national injuries, should be compelled to give up such profit for the purpose of distributing it among the victims of their policy, or of otherwise appropriating it as circumstances may require.

Thousands of respectable families have been ruined. Tens of thousands have been more

or less impoverished and deprived of the hard-earned fruits of their honest industry. Hundreds of thousands of valuable workmen have been deprived of employment, and reduced to a state of indigence and degradation. The whole country has been covered with difficulties, discords, and anxieties; with losses, injuries, and privations; with broken fortunes; with broken hearts. Who has done these things? *A national investigation must be instituted.*

On whatsoever side we turn our eyes, we thus find subjects of the highest public importance, every where demanding the public attention, and every where requiring the legal interference of the industrious classes. The vindication of the NATIONAL JUSTICE, the equalisation and reduction of the NATIONAL TAXES, the protection of public rights, THE REDRESS OF PUBLIC WRONGS, the necessity of REFORM IN PARLIAMENT, and the relief of the NATIONAL DISTRESS, *all require that the NATIONAL MIND should slumber no more.*

Under these views and impressions it is, therefore, that we propose to form, in BIRMINGHAM, a GENERAL POLITICAL UNION of the INDUSTRIOUS CLASSES, for the PROTECTION OF PUBLIC RIGHTS. We are forbidden to exercise the constitutional privilege of electing MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT; but we are not forbidden to appoint *councils of our own*, under whose guidance we may act, and through whose means we may bring the moral force of the public opinion, to act legally upon the legislative functions. By means of these *councils*, dependent on the breath of the PEOPLE, and representing the true interests of the PEOPLE, we may yet hope to have the RIGHTS, LIBERTIES, and INTERESTS OF ALL, peacefully and legally restored and secured. We shall, at any rate, succeed in collecting and organizing the public opinion, and in bringing the public wrongs and grievances to the knowledge of the legislative bodies, and more particularly of the Crown itself, the natural refuge of the people under all complaints against the House of Commons. Our gracious King still possesses high and extensive prerogatives regarding the elections of members of Parliament, and those prerogatives we cannot doubt that he will put in force, for the protection of his faithful people, whenever their wants and interests shall have been fully and efficiently ascertained.

*The following, then, are the objects of the
POLITICAL UNION:*

1st.—To obtain by every just and legal means, such a REFORM in the COMMONS' HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT, as may ensure a REAL and EFFECTUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE LOWER AND MIDDLE CLASSES OF THE PEOPLE in that House.

2nd.—To inquire, consult, consider, and determine, respecting the rights and liberties of the industrious classes, and respecting the

legal means of securing those which remain and recovering those which are lost.

3rd.—To prepare petitions, addresses, and remonstrances to the Crown and the Legislative Bodies, respecting the *preservation and restoration of PUBLIC RIGHTS*, and respecting the repeal of *bad laws*, and the enactment of *good laws*.

4th.—To prevent and redress as far as practicable, all LOCAL PUBLIC WRONGS AND OPPRESSIONS, and all LOCAL ENCROACHMENTS upon the rights, interests, and privileges of the community.

5th.—To obtain the repeal of the MALT and BEER TAXES; and, in general, to obtain an alteration in the system of taxation, so as to cause it to press less severely upon the industrious classes of the community, and more equally upon the wealthy classes.

6th.—To obtain the *reduction of each separate tax and expense* of the Government in the same degree as the *legislative increase* in the *value of money*, has increased their *respective values*, and *has reduced and is reducing the general prices of labour* throughout the country.

7th.—To promote *peace, union, and concord*, among all classes of his Majesty's subjects, and to guide and direct the public mind into uniform, peaceful, and legitimate operations; instead of leaving it to waste its strength in loose, desultory, and unconnected exertions, or to carve to its own objects, unguided, unassisted, and uncontrolled.

8th.—To collect and organize the peaceful expression of the PUBLIC OPINION, so as to bring it to act upon the legislative functions in a just, legal, and effectual way.

9th.—To influence by every legal means, the elections of members of Parliament, so as to promote the return of upright and capable representatives of the people.

10th.—To adopt such measures as may be legal and necessary for the purpose of obtaining an effectual and parliamentary investigation into the situation of the country, and into the cause of its embarrassments and difficulties, with the view of relieving the NATIONAL DISTRESS, of rendering justice to the injured as far as practicable, and of bringing to trial, any members of either House of Parliament, who may be found to have acted from criminal or corrupt motives.

The above are the OBJECTS of the POLITICAL UNION. The following are its RULES and REGULATIONS:—

1st.—The Constitution of this Society is essentially popular. It admits as equal members, all persons whatever, whose names shall be registered in the books of the Union, so long as they shall conform to the rules and regulations of the Union.

2nd.—The general management of the affairs of the UNION is committed to a POLITICAL COUNCIL, chosen annually at the GENERAL MEETINGS of the MEMBERS OF THE UNION,

and subject only to the control of such annual or other general meetings.

3rd.—All persons becoming members of the Union, are expected to contribute such donations and annual or quarterly subscriptions as they can conveniently afford, the subscriptions not being less than 1s. per quarter.

4th.—A general annual meeting of the members of the Union takes place on the first Monday in July. The members of the Union also meet whenever called together by order of the Political Council, or by a requisition signed by the chairman or deputy chairman of the Political Council, and countersigned by the secretary; or by a requisition signed by any seven of the Political Council, or by not less than 200 members of the Union. No general meeting can be held unless the requisition is advertised in a Birmingham newspaper, or otherwise is placarded in fifty streets of the town. The Secretary produces the books for inspection at all general meetings.

5th.—The general meetings of the members of the Union choose annually, on the first Monday in July, the POLITICAL COUNCIL of not less than 36 individuals; into whose hands the disposition and expenditure of the funds of the Society, and the general management of its concerns for the ensuing year, are confided.

6th.—The Political Council cannot exist more than one year without being *re-chosen* by the general meetings. At the general meetings each individual is put in nomination separately (or in such way as the general meetings may direct), and is declared a member of the Council by the majority of members of the Union present. The chairman decides on which side is the majority; unless a division is demanded by fifty members present, in which case a division takes place, and tellers appointed on each side.

7th.—The general meetings choose annually three auditors for the ensuing year, who shall pass the accounts of the Council for such year; and in case two of such auditors shall not agree in passing the accounts, the subject of difference shall be submitted to the general meetings.

8th.—The general meetings choose a treasurer and trustees, in whose hands the funds of the society are deposited.

9th.—The Political Council meet weekly, or as often as they may deem necessary; at such meetings five of them are competent to act; they keep a record of their proceedings, and they appoint general meetings of the society as often as may become expedient.

10th.—The Political Council appoint a chairman, a deputy chairman, a secretary, collectors of contributions, and such other officers, either with or without salaries as may be found expedient.

11th.—The Council employ such solicitors and legal advisers as they may approve.

12th.—The Council employ the funds of the society solely in effecting the objects of the society, to the best of their judgment and discretion; and no money can be drawn from the

treasurer or trustees, without an order passed by the Council, and signed by five of its members.

13th.—No part of the funds of the society can be expended in any object in which a member of the Council is personally interested, without the previous consent of two-thirds of the members of the Council present at a meeting specially called for the purpose of considering the subject.

14th.—The Council pay their own expenses. They hold no secret meetings. They have power to add to their number, and to dismiss from the general meetings any persons disturbing the peace, or violating the rules and regulations of the society.

15th.—No alteration of, or addition to, the rules and regulations of the society can, be adopted without being previously submitted to the Council, and recommended by a majority to a general meeting of the society.

16th.—The subscriptions of noblemen and gentlemen, are invited in support of the POLITICAL UNION; the objects of which being strictly conservatory, are calculated in restoring the just rights and interests of the INDUSTRIOUS CLASSES, to confirm the CONSTITUTIONAL PRIVILEGES of the ARISTOCRACY, and to preserve every class of the community from the common anarchy which threatens all.

The following are the duties of the MEMBERS of the POLITICAL UNION:

1st.—To be good, faithful, and loyal subjects of the King.

2nd.—To obey the laws of the land; and where they cease to protect the rights, liberties, and interests of the community, to endeavour to get them changed by just, legal, and peaceful means, ONLY.

3rd.—To present themselves at all general meetings of the POLITICAL UNION, as far as they conveniently can; to conduct themselves peaceably and legally at such meetings, and to depart to their respective homes as soon as the chairman shall leave the chair.

4th.—To choose only just, upright, and able men, as members of the POLITICAL COUNCIL, and to dismiss them, and elect others in their stead, whenever they shall cease to watch over and defend THE RIGHTS, LIBERTIES, AND INTERESTS OF THE LOWER AND MIDDLE CLASSES OF THE PEOPLE.

5th.—To obey, strictly, all the just and legal directions of the POLITICAL COUNCIL, of soon as they shall be made public, and so far as they can, legally and conveniently, be obeyed.

6th.—To bear in mind that the strength of our society consists in the PEACE, Order, Unity, and LEGALITY of our proceedings; and to consider all persons as enemies who shall, in any way, invite or promote violence, discord, or division, or any illegal or doubtful measures.

7th.—Never to forget that by the exercise of the above qualities, we shall produce the

peaceful display of an immense, organized, moral power, which cannot be despised or disregarded; but that, if we do not keep clear of the innumerable and intricate laws which surround us, the lawyer and the soldier will probably break in upon us, and render all our exertions vain.

The following are the duties of the MEMBERS of the POLITICAL COUNCIL:

1st.—To endeavour, to the utmost of their power, to carry into effect the OBJECTS of the POLITICAL UNION, by every just, legal, and peaceful means.

2nd.—To use none other than just, legal, and peaceful means.

3rd.—To seek no private objects of their own, and to use the funds of the society solely in promoting the objects of the society.

4th.—To watch closely the proceedings of the Legislature, and to present petitions and remonstrances to the Crown and Legislative Bodies, whenever the rights, liberties, and interests of the lower and middle classes of the community are invaded; or, whenever they can be restored or secured.

5th.—To endeavour to devise the means of preserving the peace and order of this town and neighbourhood, during any political convulsions which may be brought upon the country, through the distress occasioned by the mismanagement of public affairs.

6th.—To consider and report upon the legality and practicability of holding CENTRICAL MEETINGS of DELEGATES from the INDUSTRIOUS CLASSES, in the same manner as similar kinds of MEETINGS were lately held by the DELEGATES of the *Agriculturalists*, assembled at Henderson's Hotel.

7th.—To consider the means of organizing a system of operations, whereby the PUBLIC PRESS may be influenced to act generally in support of the PUBLIC INTERESTS.

8th.—In all their proceedings, to look chiefly to the recovery and preservation of the RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF THE LOWER AND MIDDLE CLASSES OF THE PEOPLE, taking care never to sanction any measures which are calculated to circumscribe or endanger any just rights or immunities of the privileged orders.

These, then, are the VIEWS AND OBJECTS, and these are the RULES, REGULATIONS, and PROVISIONS under which we propose to form the POLITICAL UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF PUBLIC RIGHTS. We respectfully submit them to our FELLOW-TOWNSMEN, for their sanction and support, and for such corrections and improvements as they may suggest.

In seeking a reform in the Commons' House of Parliament, we think it proper to declare that we make no complaint against the House of Lords. That Right Honourable House fulfils its duty as an intermediate body between the Crown and the people; and it has often stood forward in defence of popular rights, when those rights have been endangered. But, by some means or other, the influence of

the House of Lords breaking out from its proper sphere, has gradually extended itself to the elections of the members of the House of Commons, and this latter House, thus partaking of the station, habits, and modes of thinking of the Upper House, has, consequently, lost its original character, and become inefficient for the discharge of the duties prescribed to it by the constitution.

Nor have we any fault to find in the general frame and fabric of our excellent constitution. On the contrary, we readily acknowledge, what all experience confirms, that no system could possibly be devised, better suited to the genius and habits of the British people. We only find fault with the present state and composition of the *People's own House*, where, in our judgment, the interests and rights of the people are not properly understood; and, consequently, not properly defended and secured. If we should succeed in obtaining a just and effectual reform in this honourable House, it will be happy for us, and for all classes of our countrymen; for it is now sufficiently evident that through the mismanagement and inefficiency of the House of Commons, the aristocracy themselves are beginning to feel the injuries and the dangers to which the industrious classes have so long and so cruelly been exposed. We call, therefore, with confidence upon the ancient aristocracy of the land to come forward, and take their proper station at the head of the people, in this great crisis of the national affairs. They have, formerly, defended their country against the open exercise of tyrannic power. We trust that they will now, also, defend it against the silent and undermining encroachments of a corrupt borough influence, which deprives them of their just political power, and threatens their interest in common with our own.

Above all things, we rely upon the benevolence and paternal affection of our good and patriot King. We deprecate sincerely the insidious and criminal attempts, which we frequently witness, to hold up our gracious Sovereign before the eyes of his people in an unworthy and derogatory light; and those equally insidious efforts which are also made to hold up before the Royal eyes, the faithful and affectionate subjects of his Majesty, as disaffected to his Royal person, or to his kingly office and Government. All these attempts we deprecate, as calculated and intended to sow distrust and dislike between his Majesty and his faithful and loyal people, in order that the guilty parties concerned in these calumnies may find the means of controlling and circumscribing the Royal prerogatives, on the one hand, and the just rights and liberties of the people, on the other. It is with this guilty object that these atrocious calumnies are propagated. It shall be our study to counteract them, as far as lies in our humble power, by exhibiting, upon every occasion, the most sincere attachment to the sacred person of the King, and the most dutiful submission to the laws.

If our fellow townsmen should think proper to act upon the plan which we have laid down, and if their example should be followed up by similar Unions throughout the country, we cannot but anticipate the most important benefits to the LOWER AND MIDDLE CLASSES of the community. These classes will thus possess representative bodies of their own, chosen annually by themselves, and entirely dependent upon themselves; by means of which they will be enabled to act upon the national legislature in a just, legal, and efficient way. The PUBLIC OPINION, instead of being scattered and diffused throughout the country, and concealed within the breasts of individuals, will be collected and concentrated in influential masses; and in those masses it will be guided and directed into wholesome and legal operation upon the legislature of the country.

We have given great power to the Political Council. In all organized bodies, power must exist somewhere, or there can be no order, no discipline, no unity of object or operation. Under the present operation of the public opinion, every thing is disjointed and inefficient. One man petitions for one object, a second petitions for another; a third moves to-day, a fourth moves to-morrow; a fifth recommends one line of conduct, a sixth recommends another. All this is futile. What, for example, could be expected to a military body acting upon principles like these? The exertions of a whole army would come to nothing. So it is with the moral army of public opinion. To become efficient, it must have organization, order, discipline, and unity of object and operation. It must be animated with one common mind. It must move to one common object. It must move through the same road, and at the same time. Without this, we can do nothing. By a moral discipline of this kind, if we have virtue to act upon it, we can do every thing that is just and proper for us to do. It is, therefore, that we have made obedience to the Council an indispensable rule of our Society. But, in return for this, we have made the Council entirely dependent upon the General Meetings of the Union. By these means, we hope that we establish a system, which combines the order, unity, and effect of discipline, with the force and freedom of popular enthusiasm.

In carrying this great object into effect, we use no violence, and we allow none. Far from us, and far from our righteous cause, be the use of means which we deprecate in others, and which no circumstances could justify in us, so long as our last remaining liberties are left to us; and as the KING'S THRONE presents a bulwark, under which his faithful people may find a shelter from the oppressor's wrong. We seek no wrong to others. We only seek justice for ourselves and for our country. We put in force two constitutional rights; the right of meeting together, peacefully and legally; and the right of petitioning Parliament. We only meet, consult, resolve, and petition. We discuss the effect of public mea-

sures upon our own affairs, and we take the proper legal steps for securing our own redress. In a great national emergency, when the legislature has lost its *land marks*, and its guides to the national welfare, we bring forwards the intelligence, the public spirit, and the practical knowledge of the industrious classes, to the aid of the legislative councils.

In any common state of things, tradesmen and mechanics might not, perhaps, be called upon to interfere in political subjects. Each individual is perhaps more beneficially employed for himself, and for his country, in confining his industry within his own particular occupation. This *might be the case*, when the public affairs are both honestly and rationally conducted; but it is not so now. The public business is now become the best private business for every man to attend to. Without attention to public affairs, indeed, there is now no security for private interests. Until the public business is better conducted, it is in vain that the industrious classes use diligence, and prudence, and economy, and anxiety, in the management of their respective affairs. It is in vain that they "rise up early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness;" they do but realise the fabled torments of the wretch condemned to waste his labours in "continually rolling a stone up hill, which continually recoils to crush his own head." This, in a great degree, has been the situation of the industrious classes in England for several years. The men who have occupied their capital in productive power, in working the great duties upon which the existence of mankind depends; these men have grown poor, as the reward of their industry and virtue! But the men who have locked up their capital in a chest, have found it daily increasing in value!! These men have reaped riches, as the reward of idleness and sloth!! The reward of industry, indeed, may be said to be destroyed in England. "The Ox is muzzled that treadeth out the corn." Error succeeds error, and folly succeeds folly, until the nation is at last brought into such a state that the most careless and superficial observer may perceive, that great political changes must take place.

It is under these circumstances, therefore, that we deem it necessary that the industrious classes of the community should come forward in their own defence, and put in force the political functions which the constitution and the law allow them to exercise. Under better circumstances, and under a less complex state of society, the legislature, as it is, might perhaps be competent to restore and secure the national prosperity. But fatal experience has sufficiently proved, for fifteen years together, that, under the existing state of things, the legislature, as it is, is not competent to protect the most vital interests of the country. At this very moment, agriculture, manufactures, commerce, trade, the shipping interest, the colonial interest, every great interest of the nation that is vital to its welfare, to its honour,

to its safety, to its very existence, is suffering under calamities the most afflicting, and dangers the most appalling, which *both the Ministers and the Parliament themselves have expressed their inability to relieve!!* What then have we to do, but to look after our own affairs? Is the national mind to slumber for ever? It is time that this state of things should come to an end. If any exertions of ours can conduce to this great result, those exertions shall not be wanting.

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